



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Release to the PM's OF TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1945

Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas today made public the decision of Secretary Harold L. Ickes that it would not be in the public interest to authorize the abandonment of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Essex County, Massachusetts.

Secretary Ickes, however, ordered that certain of the lands taken for purposes of the refuge be returned to owners in "hardship" cases.

In his decision on complaints concerning the establishment of the refuge, Secretary Ickes ordered the Fish and Wildlife Service to administer the refuge in accordance with the following policies:

1. Detailed plans covering all proposed water impoundment projects shall be submitted to the Department of Public Health of the State of Massachusetts for consideration before the construction thereof is initiated.
2. Mosquito control operations shall be conducted on the refuges with a view to reducing the existing menace.
3. Established practices with respect to the administration of clam beds shall not be disturbed, and all possible protective measures looking to the perpetuation of this important resource shall be applied.
4. The four permanent and actual residents within the refuge, Patrick Scannel, Omer Roy, and Joseph and Louis Kilbourn, shall be authorized to continue the occupancy of their homes, and arrangements shall be made for the incorporation in the stipulations to be entered in the condemnation proceedings of provisions respecting such continued use.
5. The former owners of the acquired lands shall be given preference in the use of the forage, forest, and other renewable resources which may be disposed of under sound conservation practices.
6. The owners of summer residences within the purchased area shall be authorized to use such residences for recreational purposes under formal permits.
7. The grazing of livestock and the cutting of wild hay to supply the dairy industry shall be permitted under reasonable regulations on the meadows and the marshes.

8. The cutting of timber for fuel wood or construction purposes shall be authorized in the forests of the area in accordance with sound forestry practices.
9. The recreational uses of the area shall be fully provided for and suitable recreational facilities made available for the use of the public.
10. The proposed dam on the Parker River, when constructed, shall be so operated as to provide a sufficient release of water fully to protect existing riparian rights.

Among the so-called "hardship" cases which Secretary Ickes decided must have "specific consideration" are those of James Prime, Jr., Everett A. Smith, D. Burton Brown, J. Raymond and Newell Adams, Justin A. Brown, Howard R. Sheys, Randolph L. Thurlow, Alfred H. Dole, Henry G. Hunter, Charles E. Jaquith, Ralph Villacaro, Malcolm F. Fryer, Andrew S. Longfellow, Rodney L. Nass, and Walter B. Mikonis. Adjustments, however, will not necessarily be limited to this group.

In his decision Secretary Ickes found that:

1. The coastal section of Massachusetts is of fundamental importance in the national refuge system as a nesting and feeding area and also has value as a breeding ground and wintering area for several economically important game species of migratory birds and that the area selected for the refuge in the vicinity of Parker River is especially well adapted for refuge purposes, is low in value, and that the area can be developed as a wildlife refuge without undue interference with other economic uses.

2. The State of Massachusetts gave its consent, in accordance with law, to the establishment of the refuge, and the intention of the United States to take lands for wildlife refuge purposes was a matter of common knowledge in the locality.

3. Previous experience shows that the establishment of a refuge improves shooting in the surrounding areas and there is every reason to believe that it will be possible to build up a sizable flight of Canada geese at the Parker River refuge and thereby "afford a return of the goose and other hunting that was formerly so popular along the Massachusetts coast".

4. The proposed water impoundment projects connected with the refuge were presented to a committee of Massachusetts health and conservation officials which, in a formal report to former Governor Leverett Saltonstall, said that it had "received a satisfactory answer to all questions propounded" to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

5. The elimination of mud flats in the refuge area will greatly reduce the present mosquito hazard since the common mosquitoes of the area are the mud mosquito and the saltmarsh mosquito which lay their eggs only in mud and which can be eliminated either by drainage or impoundment. The assertion that soldiers infected with malaria will seriously endanger the people of the Commonwealth and produce an epidemic of the disease is not based upon fact.

6. The important clamming industry of Ipswich and Rowley will not be injured and it is not necessarily true that an increase in the population of the black duck would lead to a depletion of the clam beds in the area, but that if such occurs proper control methods will be taken.

7. The withdrawal of approximately 12,000 acres of land in Essex County will cause a limited tax loss to which will in part be offset through payments in lieu of taxes as authorized by Congress.

8. At the time of the filing of the declaration of taking, December 30, 1944, there were only four permanent residents on the lands being acquired and there were on the refuge 16 abandoned camps or cottages, 13 summer cottages, and 44 buildings which have some use for storage, as hunting camps, or for recreational purposes. Thus the taking dispossessed few people of their homes. In cases where occupancy of summer cottages is desired by former owners, permits authorizing such use will be granted.

9. Establishment of the refuge will not disturb the agricultural economy of the locality since 91.2 per cent of the area is brush land, fresh marsh, salt marsh, sand dunes, swamp, tidal flats, woodland, and navigable waters and only 1.5 per cent of the lands acquired are classified as croplands.

10. Available information shows that the Parker River will furnish adequate water for filling the proposed Crane Pond impoundment without interfering with the operations of the mill of the Byfield Snuff Company.

Secretary Ickes also decided that the Monomoy Point National Wildlife Refuge will also be operated in accordance with the policies laid down for administration of the Parker River Refuge.

He pointed out that the small Monomoy Point refuge, which is in Barnstable County, had been in the process of establishment since January 29, 1941, when condemnation proceedings were filed, that the proceedings were held in abeyance, due to protests from persons opposed to the establishment of the refuge, but that in 1944 the Corps of Engineers of the War Department advised the Fish and Wildlife Service that the land was necessary for war purposes and requested that title be taken immediately. The Department of the Interior, with the approval of the Migratory Bird Commission, took title on June 15, 1944 and the land was immediately occupied by the War Department which is still using it.

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